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Wednesday, Dec. 31, 1997

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942 www.advancenet.net/~lflorek

Economic news, elections lead list of top 10 stories in 1997

Economic and political news head the list of top local stories in 1997.

Leading the list is the September announcement that Silgan will stop can production in 1998.

Approximately 50 people are expected to be laid off from the factory, which will continue to manufacture can ends. Another 100 workers will remain on the job.

Reductions in force are expected to be completed by April 1998, when three can lines and 14 job classifications are eliminated. Lay-offs will be done by seniority, company officials said.

Second in the top 10 was the April mayoral election, where big-city political tactics came to small-town America.

Incumbent mayor Bob Ault kept his seat, beating challenger alderman David Borders 1,035 to 506.

Township and school elections were also held this year.

In Grant Township, incumbents Carol Flint, Joyce Dukes and Jim Crouch were re-elected supervisor, clerk and road commissioner. Newcomer Susie Sheppard was named assessor.

Trustees elected included incumbent Bill Boose and newcomers Steve Willard, Dale Lithgow and Connie Wilson.

In Hoopeston Area school board races, incumbents Gary Miller, Mike Morris, Vickie Ellis and Jerry Bird chose not to seek re-election, leaving the door open for Larry Lobb, Jeff Stipp, Duane Sheppard and John Smiley.

A total of 10 candidates vied for the four open seats.

The contest was no easier in the Rossville-Alvin district, where three incumbents and five newcomers ran



1997

A Year in Review



for four seats. Winners there were Ed Perkins, Dennis Price, Roger Satterwhite and Lynndel Davan, as well as Tim Thornsborough, who lost but, because of boundary problems, was seated.

Third in the list was the September announcement that Chiquita Brands planned to purchase Stokely USA.

What the buy-out means for the local plant will not be known until after Stokely board votes on the change in January.

The Hoopeston plant employees 27 full-time workers. The number swells to about 250 during pumpkin pack.

Crime took fourth through sixth places in the list.

The shooting death 44-year-old Terry D. Stephenson, Rossville, is fourth in the list.

Stephenson's wife, Rhonda, was charged with four counts of murder in the crime. She is expected to stand trial in 1998.

Fifth in the list was the suspension and subsequent trial of Rossville village clerk/collector Kathy Roark.

Roark, investigated for stealing village funds, was indicted by a Vermilion County grand jury for theft, obstruction of justice and official misconduct.

In September, Roark pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice charge and was ordered to pay approximately \$1,200 in village funds. In a plea bargain, the other charges was dismissed.

In February, Hoopeston had the dubious honor - in the space of a few weeks - of having two of the largest cocaine busts in Vermilion County history.

See TOP 10 on other side

Top 10 continued from other side

Three Chicago people were arrested Feb. 5, charged

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with possession with intent to deliver and conspiracy to deliver between 400 and 900 grams of cocaine.

The new record was shattered on Feb. 27, when a Hoopeston man and two Chicago people were arrested on the same charges for what police said were larger amounts of the drug.

Seventh of the top 10 was police chief Orval Kaag's announcement that, after 35 years on the job, he would retire.

Kaag, who retired in January, went on to work at Schumacher Electric. In April, city officials announced Carl Valentine would head the department.

Valentine, who had been chief in Brookland, Ark., is a Rantoul native.

History in the making propelled the Hoopeston Area girls basketball team into eighth place in the top 10.

For the first time in school history, the girls earned a Vermilion County crown, followed by a sectional championship.

Some township residents were hot after a December vote by Grant Township trustees to raise the tax levy for rural fire protection. That story comes in at number nine.

Trustees voted to raise the levy from .0594 per \$100 assessed valuation to .1025. The additional income will allow the Hoopeston Fire Department, which provides rural fire protection, to improve equipment both in the

Police News



Bruce A. Inman, 35, of 630 E. McNeil, was arrested at 12:01 p.m. Tuesday, charged with battery on a complaint from Richard L. Smith, 111 E. Lincoln.

Police said Inman shoved Smith against a wall in the 100 block of North Market after the men argued about money Smith said Inman owed him.

Inman was released on a notice to appear after he turned himself in to police.

Jane Birch of Baer's Motel, Route 9, reported Tuesday that someone fired five shots through a window at the motel office.

David Bell of Crown Ford, 623 S. Dixie Hwy., reported Tuesday that someone fired bbs or pellets at the rear window of a 1983 Lincoln Continental and a 1982 Ford pickup truck, damaging both.

The vehicles were parked at the dealership when the damage occurred.

department and in the township.

Rounding out the list was another historical event, the December water main break that caused Hoopeston to be without water for the first time in memory.

The break, on Second Ave. between Main and Penn,

Hoopeston, area residents make headlines during 1997

Companies and crime were not the only things making news in 1997. Some area residents made the headlines with their activities.

In January, James and Melissa Myers of Hoopeston learned that loving a child means "in sickness and health" as they coped with their son, Andrew's heart condition.

In February, a local Boy Scout troop named its first Eagle Scout in 15 years as Brian DeNeal received the highest award in scouting.

Also in February, WHPO radio played matchmaker for an Iroquois County couple, Marie White and Steven Summers, who were wed in an on-air ceremony.

In March, Mike Pemberton was named head of the 1998 United Community Fund of Grant Township fund drive while in April, Phil and Teresa Cox held a grand opening for the former Parkview Lanes, now 10 Pin Alley.

In May, Don Dean stepped down as Hoopeston city clerk after 24 years on the job and Tom Kasallis, a former Hoopeston post office worker, was named

resulted in a boil order for several days after water was restored.

postmaster in Wellington.

In June, Aunt Jody of Rossville turned her mini park into a monument to trash following acts of vandalism, while in July, Harold and Wilma Cox had their dog returned.

In August, a group of Rossville residents held a benefit for long-time businesswoman Naomi Freeman, to defray medical expenses while Hoopeston Area High School students got Channel 41 on the air.

In September, Doug Wagoner, along with other members of the Vermilion County Dive Team, trained new members at the Hoopeston swimming pool and other locations in the county. Also, the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce, Hoopeston Area Education Association and Chronicle newspaper awarded local residents and businesses for their contributions to the community.

Silgan Containers, Brown's Cash & Carry and Silver Brothers Construction, as well as Mabel Mathieson and Howard Gaddis were honored, as was Don Dean, HA superintendent.

In October, Ryan Standifer of Hoopeston attended the Promise Keepers rally in Washington, while in November, township supervisor Carol Flint was honored for her "caring ways" and sense of humor. In December, Dave

In the Hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital

Dec. 29, 1997

Admitted: Nella Hollen and Irvin Crose, Hoopeston; John Laurie, Rankin

Discharged: none.

Weather



Partly cloudy today. High 25. Tonight, cloudy, cold. Low 15. Tomorrow, windy. High 36, low 15. Friday, windy, warmer. High 45, low 35.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopeston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

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